Session 12 - Persecuted for righteousness' sake (Mt. 5:10)

I. PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE (MT. 5:10-12)

[10]Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11]Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. [12]Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven… (Mt. 5:10-12)

A. Living a "Sermon on the Mount" lifestyle will have a tremendous impact on our inner man and should cause us to live very differently from the inside out. That kind of righteousness and purity will most certainly cause people, at some level, to persecute us. In fact, in many ways, that's the very result we are looking for. ***Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for *great* is your reward in heaven…***

B. Jesus blesses any who will endure persecution for His sake with a rejoicing spirit. Persecution includes being penalized or harmed socially, verbally, financially, or physically. Most persecution in the West is social, verbal, or financial, by being reviled, resisted, or ostracized.

C. Jesus warns His people to expect persecution and tells us how to respond to it. ***[18] "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:18-19)***

D. Three blessings that come for enduring persecution with a rejoicing heart are as follows:

1. Persecution produces perseverance and godly character in us in this age: ***[3] And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; [4] and perseverance, character; and character, hope. [5] Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.(Rom. 5:3-5).***

2. The Spirit of glory rests on those who are being persecuted: ***[14] If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.(1 Pet. 4:14).***

3. Great eternal rewards will be received in the age to come: ***[17] and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. [18] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. 8:17-18) [17] For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, (2 Cor. 4:17).***

E. ***For righteousness' sake:*** We don't want persecution unless it's for righteousness because there is a significant difference between being persecuted for the sake of Jesus and suffering the consequences of our own fleshly attitudes, actions, or causes.